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T H E  
L A W O F L I B E R T Y,  
O R,  
R O Y A L L A W,

By which *all Mankind* will certainly *be judged!*



—————

— 47 —

TABLE OF LIBRALS

OR

THE LIBRALS

OF THE LIBRALS

—————

THE  
LAW OF LIBERTY,  
OR,  
ROYAL LAW,  
BY WHICH  
ALL MANKIND WILL CERTAINLY  
BE JUDGED!

EARNESTLY RECOMMENDED TO THE  
SERIOUS CONSIDERATION  
OF ALL  
SLAVEHOLDERS AND SLAVEDEALERS.  
BY GRANVILLE SHARP.

*“ So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be JUDGED  
“ by THE LAW OF LIBERTY.”* Jam. ii. 12.

L O N D O N :

Printed for B. WHITE, at Horace's Head, in Fleet Street;  
and E. and C. DILLY, in the Poultry.

MDCCLXXVI.



T H E  
 L A W   O F   L I B E R T Y,  
 O R,  
 R O Y A L   L A W.

I N two former Tracts I have attempted to describe the JUST LIMITATION OF SLAVERY IN THE LAWS OF GOD, and THE LAW OF PASSIVE OBEDIENCE, with respect more particularly to the due SUBMISSION of *Christian Servants* or *Slaves* to their *Masters*.

The purpose of the present Tract is not only to point out the reciprocal duty of *Christian Masters* to their *Servants*, and all other persons with whom they are connected, but also more particularly  
 to

to enable our *British American* Slaveholders to examine or *measure* (with very little trouble) by *the Rule* of God's Holy Word, *the Legality* or *Illegality* of *Slavery among Christians*. For this purpose some of the clearest and most essential *Maxims* or *Principles* of Scripture are selected and compared with each other in the following pages.

“ So speak ye, and so do, as they that  
 “ shall be JUDGED by THE LAW OF  
 “ LIBERTY.”

This the earnest advice of the Apostle James in his General Epistle; (ii. 12.) and as it is therefore manifest that we shall certainly BE JUDGED by “ THE  
 “ LAW OF LIBERTY,” it becomes a business of the utmost importance to ascertain what particular Law is thereby to be understood, that we may *write it on our hearts*, since our everlasting happiness



pineness depends upon it, and the peril of eternal damnation seems to attend a breach of it; “*for he shall have JUDG-  
 “MENT WITHOUT MERCY*” (says the Apostle in the following verse) “*who  
 “bath shewed NO MERCY!*” The necessary premises for the examination of the question are nothing less than the fundamental moral Principles of Christianity; and if I am rather prolix in defining them, I hope *the importance of the subject* will be considered as a sufficient excuse; for indeed *the subject* is not only *important* to those persons for whose use this Tract is particularly intended (*I mean those persons who desire to be satisfied concerning THE LEGALITY or ILLEGALITY OF SLAVERY AMONG CHRISTIANS*) but to all Mankind besides of every rank and denomination.

All the moral duties of the Gospel are briefly comprehended in *two single*  
*Prin-*

*Principles* of the Law of Moses, viz. THE LOVE OF GOD, and THE LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOUR. Nothing, therefore, can be esteemed truly *lawful* under the Gospel, that is, in the least, repugnant to either of these; and we need never be at a loss to distinguish what is, or what is not so, if we will but carefully consider the proportion or degree of *that Love*, which is clearly expressed to be *due*, both to *God* and our *Neighbour* in these two comprehensive and eternal maxims. The degree of *Love due to God* exceeds all comparison or consideration of other things; for it must (says the text) be “ *with ALL thy heart, and with “ ALL* “ *thy soul, and with ALL thy might.*” (Deut. vi. 5.) which necessarily implies a most fervent zeal for the glory of GOD, far exceeding all worldly considerations. And with respect to the degree or true proportion of *Love due to our Neighbour*, we have no pretence to plead ignorance,

since

since the appointed *measure* of it is contained in *every Man's Breast*—"THOU  
 "SHALT LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR AS  
 "THYSELF. (Lev. xix. 18.) "On  
 "these two Commandments" (said the  
 Eternal Judge) "hang ALL THE LAW  
 "and THE PROPHETS." (Mat. 22. 40.)  
 The same Eternal Judge of Mankind  
 made also, on another occasion, a similar  
 declaration concerning the *Sum or Com-*  
*pendium* "OF THE LAW AND THE  
 "PROPHETS"—"*All things whatsoever*  
*ye would that Men should do to you*"  
 (said he) "*do ye even so to them; for*  
 "*this is THE LAW AND THE PRO-*  
 "PHETS." (Matth. vii. 12.) This  
 most excellent rule of conduct and be-  
 haviour towards *our Neighbours*, which  
 includes the whole Substance or Spirit  
 of "THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS,"  
 so perfectly corresponds with the second  
 great Commandment, to LOVE *our Neigh-*  
*bours as ourselves* (viz. to manifest our

B

LOVE,

LOVE, *by* DOING *to them*, as we ourselves might WITH REASON AND JUSTICE expect and desire THEY WOULD DO UNTO us) that it seems intended like a sort of paraphrase to explain the true tenour of it; for though the mode of expression is different, yet the effect of the doctrine is undoubtedly the same; because the Apostle Paul has in like manner declared this second great Commandment to be the Compendium of “all the Law.” “All the Law” (says he) “is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt LOVE thy Neighbour AS THYSELF.” (Gal. v. 14.

SELF-LOVE, therefore, must be the RULE or MEASURE (not of Self-gratification, or private Interest, but) of our Conduct and Behaviour towards other Men! It must not be SOLE TENANT of the heart; but is always to leave equal room for a due balance of that Love which we  
owe

*owe to our Neighbour*, whenever the present circumstances (whatever they may be) require a conscientious regard to the *publick Good*, or a sympathetick consideration for *the Feelings and Sufferings of Individuals*, to enable us to fulfil *our Duty to our Neighbour*. SELF-LOVE is not hereby *excluded*; for *Self-preservation*, and a prudent regard for our own support and happiness, may still be allowed an *equal Share* of our consideration, without a Breach of *this second great Commandment*, which would otherwise be too hard and difficult for *Human Nature* to receive: we are not commanded therein to love our Neighbours MORE *than ourselves*, but only (or) AS *ourselves*; so that SELF-LOVE is apparently the *true Measure of our Conduct and Behaviour towards other Men*: and though an exalted Sense of *Duty to God* (according to the *first great Commandment*) may, in some particular cases, prompt Men to noble



actions, wherein SELF-LOVE may seem to be lost in a generous and benevolent regard to others (of which there are several instances in Scripture, as I have elsewhere shewn (1) ; and also though the like admirable generosity and perfect disinterestedness may, possibly, upon some unforeseen occasion, become likewise the peculiar duty of any one of us, viz. “ *to lay down (our) Lives for the Brethren* (2), 1 John iii. 16. yet as this far exceeds the measure of *Love* laid down

(1) See my Tract on *the Law of Nature, and Principles of Action in Man*. P. 79—105.

(2) *Hereby perceive we* (or rather, it should be rendered, *Hereby have we perceived*) “ *the Love* (of God), “ *because he laid down his Life for us*” (said the Apostle, and then he immediately informs us of the duty which arises from that extraordinary manifestation of Love) “ *AND WE OUGHT* (says he) *TO LAY DOWN (our) LIVES FOR THE BRETHREN.*” 1 John iii. 16. This plain declaration of our duty (*ἡμεῖς ὀφείλομεν*, &c. “ *WE OUGHT to lay down our Lives,*” &c.) sufficiently enables us to account for the many extraordinary examples of SELF-LOVE being superseded by more noble Principles, some of which I have cited in my Tract on *the Law of Nature*,

down in the second great Commandment, which is given us as the *general*  
or

*Nature, and Principles of Action in Man*, p. 79—105, to which also the following may be added.

THE GRATITUDE of the *Galatians* to their Teacher *Paul*, is expressed by that Apostle in the strongest terms—  
“ *I bear you record (says he) that if it had been possible, ye*  
“ *would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given*  
“ *them to me.*” Gal. iv. 15.

Not inferior to this was the LOVE of that same Apostle himself towards the *Corinthians*, though they were so far from returning a *mutual affection* like the *Galatians*, that the Apostle, it seems, had reason to complain of their INGRATITUDE—“ *I will very gladly SPEND, AND BE*  
“ *SPENT for you (literally “ for your Souls,” said he)*  
“ *though the more abundantly I LOVE you, the less I be*  
“ *LOVED.*” 2 Cor. xii. 15.

TO “ SPEND, AND BE SPENT” for others, and that “ *very gladly !*” is the strongest expression of *disinterested* LOVE that could have been chosen ! It implies a cheerful sacrifice of every thing that is dear in this world (LIFE ITSELF NOT EXCEPTED !) “ *and greater Love hath no*  
“ *Man than this, that a Man lay down his Life for his*  
“ *friends.*” John xv. 13. So that, as no Man can have greater Love than this, we may certainly esteem it the highest demonstration of “ *perfect Love ;*” and as the sentence last quoted from the Apostle John relates, in its primary application, to the voluntary sacrifice which Christ made of himself to save Mankind, it leads us to the true foundation of that “ *perfect Love*” enjoined in the Scriptures,

or *ordinary* Rule of Life, we may be assured, that such a very difficult duty,  
as

tures, which (as the preceding examples demonstrate) does occasionally overcome the general Principle of “*Self-love*,” and every other *interested* Motive natural to “*MAN* !

The Apostle John informs us, no less than *twice* in *one* chapter, that “*GOD IS LOVE !*” (ὁ Θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστίν. 1 John iv. 8. ὁ Θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστίν. *ibid.* v. 16.)

This information is introduced in an argument, whereby the Apostle endeavours to inculcate a due sense of the necessity we are laid under, *to love one another*, because *GOD* hath first *loved us* : so that *GRATITUDE TO GOD* must be the foundation of our “*Love to one another* ;” and we are therefore bound to imitate (and will certainly endeavour to imitate, if “*GOD DWELLETH IN US.*” See 1 John iv. 13. 16.) that glorious Attribute of the *Divine Nature*, *LOVE* (“*GOD IS LOVE*”) which he has manifested towards us, by sacrificing all that could be *truly perfect* and *dear* in his sight, even his only begotten Son, who also *voluntarily submitted himself* (for our happiness and *eternal* welfare) to the most severe *temporal* sufferings, and trials, *even unto death* !

To *GOD*, and to the *ETERNAL WORD*, therefore, (to whom we are indebted, not only for that extraordinary manifestation of *LOVE*, but for all other things that we enjoy, even for our very existence) our return of *LOVE*, must be *UNLIMITED* ; and the *natural Principle* of *SELF-LOVE*, which is given as the measure of our *LOVE to our Neighbour* in the *Law of Liberty*, or *second great Commandment*,



as that of *laying down our Lives for the Brethren*, can only be required of us on  
very

*ment*, must be entirely suppressed whenever it falls in competition with *the Love of God* enjoined in the *first great Commandment* ; and though this doctrine is very hard and difficult to be received, and much more difficult to be practised, as it includes the most exalted *Heroism* and *Greatness of Soul* that Human Nature is capable of attaining, yet we have ample reason to hope and trust (as the discharge of our *Duty to our Neighbour* includes and fulfils the most essential part of our *Duty to God*) that those men, who carefully endeavour to make “ *the Law of Liberty*,” (I mean *the second great Commandment*) their *general or ordinary Rule of Conduct in Life*, will not want due assistance from the Almighty to enable them to fulfil also the duty which arises from *the first great Commandment*, even UNTO DEATH, if any extraordinary emergency should require such a manifestation of their LOVE ; because we are assured by the Scriptures, that “ *GOD dwelleth*” in those men, who maintain the proper measure of *Love* and *Benevolence* for the rest of mankind.

“ BELOVED” (said the *beloved Apostle*) “ *let us LOVE one another : for LOVE is of GOD, and every one that LOVETH is born of GOD, and knoweth GOD. He that LOVETH NOT knoweth not GOD, FOR GOD IS LOVE. In this was manifested the LOVE OF GOD towards us, because that GOD sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is LOVE, not that WE LOVED GOD, but that he LOVED US, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. BELOVED, IF GOD SO LOVED US, we ought also to LOVE ONE ANOTHER.*”

very extraordinary occasions, as in times of persecution, or on other such pressing emergencies, when some very singular Good or Benefit to our *Friends*, our *Country*, or *Mankind in general*, apparently depends upon our perseverance *unto death* for their sakes, in a just cause *to the Glory of God*; or to the manifestation of his revealed *Truth*, for their confirmation and example! This is, indeed, the best and most noble foundation, not only for true PATRIOTISM in all Men, *as Members*, respectively, of *some particular Nation*, but also for UNIVERSAL BENEVOLENCE, *as Citizens of the World*; which latter Duty should always regulate and limit the former (viz. PATRIOTISM) by the eternal Rules of

“ THER. *No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, GOD DWELLETH IN US, and his LOVE is perfected in us.*” 1 John iv. 7—12. And again, in the 16th verse—“ *We have known and believed the LOVE that God hath to us. GOD IS LOVE, and he that dwelleth in LOVE, DWELLETH IN GOD, AND GOD IN HIM. Herein is our LOVE MADE PERFECT, &c.*”

natural

natural Equity and Justice. But though a chearful obedience in this ultimate Duty of *laying down our Lives*, and sacrificing *Self-love*, and every temporal Blessing *for the Good of others*, does undoubtedly exalt HUMAN NATURE to the highest pitch of *Heroism* and *real Dignity*, let us all, nevertheless, pray God (as in effect we do by that comprehensive expression in our daily prayers—“*Lead us not into temptation*”) to preserve us from any such severe trials of our Obedience and LOVE to him as the necessity of of “*laying down our Lives for the Brethren* ;” lest, through the want of presence of mind, or unweariness, or through weakness and natural infirmity, any of us should unhappily shrink back from that ultimate Duty, and thereby incur the dreadful condemnation of those that *deny Christ before Men* ! Let us also be truly thankful, that the *absolute Command*, in the

second great Branch of our Duty, by which *all Mankind are to be* JUDG'D (as shall hereafter be shewn) extends no farther than to limit SELF-LOVE by a sympathetick Consideration or *Fellow-feeling* for our *Neighbour's* welfare, lest the former (*Self-love*) should be considered as the proper and “*universal Principle of Action,*” and thereby endanger the peace and happiness of Society by its *partial* instigations: let me add too, that if SELF-LOVE is not thus restrained, it will defeat its own Purpose and fixed Principles of *Self-preservation*, by incurring a dreadful and eternal Doom!

The OMISSION of an Act of *Mercy* and *Benevolence* towards our Neighbour, when it is in our power, and occasion requires it, is declared by our Lord, the Saviour of the World, to be as gross an affront, *even to himself*, as if he had been  
*personally*

*personally* neglected and denied by us !

“ *Inasmuch* (says he) *as ye did it not to*

“ *one of the least of these, YE DID IT*

“ *NOT TO ME.*” Matt. xxv. 45. And

if SINS of OMISSION, even towards *the*

*meanest of our Brethren*, are by OUR

LORD esteemed as a *personal Affront*

*to himself*, we may be assured, that the

actual COMMISSION of Injuries will be

infinitely more heinous in his sight, and

cannot escape his just Vengeance. We

must remember also, that *this Declara-*

*tion* of our Lord will be made to those

miserable wretches, who shall stand “ *on*

“ *the Left Hand,*” after the tremendous

final sentence is passed upon them !

“ *Depart from me ye Cursed, into ever-*

“ *lasting Fire, prepared for the Devil*

“ *and his Angels !*” See verse 41.

It is manifest therefore, that a *Viola-*

*tion* of THE LOVE THAT IS DUE TO

OUR NEIGHBOUR, is a Violation also of



THE LOVE OF GOD; and, on the contrary, *the latter is perfected by a strict obedience to the former*—"If we LOVE one another" (says the beloved Apostle) "God dwelleth in us, and HIS LOVE IS PERFECTED IN US." (1 John iv. 12.) So that the two great Commandments appear to be reciprocally included and blended together in their consequences; by which we may more readily perceive the propriety of our Lord's declaration, that the *second great Commandment is like unto the first* (3); and this reciprocal connexion between them enables us also to comprehend the reason why *the second is given alone* (when BOTH are undoubtedly necessary) as the grand test of Christian obedience, and as the sum and es-

(3) "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great Commandment. AND THE SECOND IS LIKE UNTO IT, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself. On these two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." (Matt. xxii. 37. to 40.)

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sence of the whole Law of God. “*For all the Law is fulfilled*” (says the Apostle Paul) “*in one word, (even) in this, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself.*” (Gal. v. 14.)

Now a continued multiplication of Statutes (as in England, where the number exceeds the capacity of the human Memory) affords matter only for *Equivocation, Doubt, and Evasion*, whereby SOUND LAW is vitiated and corrupted; and the loathsome *Prostitute*, still retaining *the Name of LAW*, arises (like the Harlot *POPERY* from pure *CHRISTIANITY*) *in another Dress*! She is clothed with the many-coloured garment of misconstruction, and seats herself at the right hand of the unjust judge, prompting him with wily Subterfuges, and *bad Precedents* instead of LAW; whereby he is enabled to ensnare the innocent, and screen the guilty. But, on the other hand, when we consider that “ALL LAW” is  
reduced

reduced to so small a compass, that it may be accounted, comparatively, as ONE WORD, there is no room left for offenders to plead *Ignorance*, as an excuse for having violated the general Laws of Morality, and the *natural Rights of Mankind*. Let me therefore exhort my opponents, as they regard their own eternal welfare, to take this subject into their most serious consideration, and no longer refuse to acknowledge this glorious WORD or *Maxim*, as the TRUE MEASURE (except a still greater measure of LOVE is required (4) of all their actions, and more especially with respect to the present point before us, the *Legality or Illegality of Slavery among Christians* ! For this question, by infallible necessity, falls under the decision of *this very Law* ; because it sets before us our own *personal Feelings*, as *the proper Measure or Standard of our Behaviour to other*

(4) This exception relates only to such extraordinary cases of emergency as are mentioned in pages 12 to 17.



*Men* ; for Tyrants, Slaveholders, Extortioners, and other Oppressors, would most certainly dislike to be treated as as they treat others ; so that this compendious Law necessarily excludes *the least Toleration of Slavery*, or of any other *Oppression*, which an *innocent Man* (5) would be unwilling to experience in his own person from another.

We

(5) On the other hand, *notorious offenders*, that are clearly convicted of their crimes by the laws of the land, may, consistently *with reason and justice*, be punished with a temporary DEPRIVATION OF LIBERTY, provided they be not *sold to strangers*, nor even to *their own countrymen*, to be subjected to *private dominion*, or the *absolute rule of individuals*, which is dreadfully baneful to morality ! The community at large (and *that community only whose Laws they have broken*) can alone have any RIGHT to detain them in *bondage* ; and this RIGHT of detaining should be moderated by such wholesome regulations for the religious *instruction*, as well as *employment*, of the unhappy convicts, as should apparently tend more to their *reformation*, (to render them worthy of being speedily restored to *Liberty*) than to any other object ; and no persons whatsoever should be entrusted with the care, instruction, or employment of such *public delinquents*, without being subject to the inspection and *legal* controul of the king's judges, and of other regular *crown officers* of the *Law department* (but of no other *crown officers* as such whatever) as also of the county courts of assizes and sessions,

courts

We must therefore acknowledge this heavenly maxim to be the true standard, not only of *mutual Benevolence* among MEN, but also, of *our Love and Duty* to GOD; since it includes the first great Commandment, by “*perfecting the Love of God in us,*” as I have before remarked (see p. 20.); so that it must necessarily be esteemed the most sure and best foundation “of PERFECT LIBERTY.” And accordingly we find it expressly distinguished in Scripture by the title of “*the Law of Liberty.*”

“*So speak ye, and so do,*” (says the Apostle James) “*as they that shall be judged by THE LAW OF LIBERTY.*” (James ii. 12.) This title properly belongs, indeed, to the *whole Law*, or

courts of inquest, grand juries, justices of the peace, sheriffs, and of such other *legal* guardians of the public peace, for and in behalf of the public, lest the cause of *liberty* should suffer by the influence of any innovation in that respect.

*Gospel*

*Gospel of Christ*, and seems to be so applied by the same Apostle in the preceding chapter (25th verse) wherein he speaks of “ *the perfect LAW OF LIBERTY.*”—Yet the *general* application of the title does not lessen the propriety of that *particular* application, which I conceive to have been intended by the Apostle in this 2d chapter, because the precept in question is *a complete Compendium of Christian Morality*, containing (as I have before observed) the *very Essence of the whole Gospel*, or *general LAW OF LIBERTY*, with respect to our *Duty towards Men*, and has, therefore, an indisputable Right, also, to the *general Title of the whole*. But there are other reasons to justify the application of this *general Title of the Gospel* to that *one comprehensive Word*, or Maxim, in which “ *all the Law is fulfilled.*”—Though the Apostle James seems to mean the *whole Gospel* in that passage of

D his

his first chapter, wherein he mentions  
 “ THE PERFECT LAW OF LIBERTY.”  
 —Yet the whole tenor of his argument  
 in the 2d chapter, where he again men-  
 tions THE LAW OF LIBERTY, is ap-  
 parently founded on the Principles of  
 the glorious Maxim in question——  
 “ THOU SHALT LOVE THY NEIGH-  
 “ BOUR AS THYSELF ;” for the *Subject*,  
 in the beginning of the chapter, parti-  
 cularly relates to *the Duty we owe to OUR*  
 NEIGHBOURS, being a warning against  
 “ *Respect of Persons*,” or *Partiality* ; and  
 as the Maxim in question forbids even  
*Self-preference*, by directing us to “ love  
 “ *our Neighbours (ὡς) AS ourselves*,” it is so  
 apparently suitable to the Apostle’s *sub-*  
*ject*, that he expressly cites it under the  
 eminent title of the “ *Royal Law* (*νομὸς*  
*Βασιλικὸν*) to enforce his argument. “ *My*  
 “ *Brethren*” (says he) “ *have not the*  
 “ *Faith of our Lord Jesus Christ*” (the  
 Lord) “ *of Glory, WITH RESPECT OF*  
 “ PER-



“ PERSONS ;” and then, after charging them in the 2d and 3d verses with *Partiality*, in *preferring* a well-dressed Man in their assemblies to the *Poor*, and after appealing to them thereupon in the 4th and 5th verses, saying, “ *Are ye not partial in yourselves,*” &c. and also, after reproving them (in the 6th and 7th verses) for *despising the Poor* ; he adds, in the 8th verse—“ *If ye fulfil,*” (says he) “ *the ROYAL LAW* (*νομον βασιλικον*) *according to the Scripture, THOU SHALT LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR AS THYSELF,*” (which is the very Maxim in question) “ *ye do well: But if ye have RESPECT TO PERSONS,*” (says he, thereby plainly pointing out this *PARTIALITY* as a direct breach of the said *ROYAL LAW*) “ *ye commit Sin, and are convinced of the Law as Transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole Law,*” (continues the Apostle) *and yet offend in one (point) he is guilty of all.* For he

“ *that said do not commit Adultery ; said*  
 “ *also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit*  
 “ *no Adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art*  
 “ *become a Transgressor of the Law. So*  
 “ *speak ye, and so do ye, as they that shall*  
 “ *be JUDGED by the LAW OF LIBERTY,”*  
 (manifestly referring us to the *indispensible Principle of doing as we would be done by*, or to that which is exactly parallel — *the loving our Neighbours as ourselves*)  
 “ FOR HE SHALL HAVE JUDGMENT  
 “ WITHOUT MERCY” (said the Apostle)  
 “ THAT HATH SHEWED NO MERCY ;  
 “ *and Mercy rejoiceth against Judgment.”*  
 (James ii. 1. to 13.)

This absolute necessity that we are laid under *to shew Mercy, that we may obtain Mercy*, is apparently founded on the very same *Principle*, which our Lord declared to be ‘ *the Law and the Prophets ;*’ that is, the sum and essence of the whole Scriptures, as I have before  
remarked

remarked—" ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER  
 " EVER YE WOULD THAT MEN SHOULD  
 " DO TO YOU, DO YE EVEN SO TO  
 " THEM: FOR THIS IS THE LAW AND  
 " THE PROPHETS;" (Mat. vii. 12.)  
 and I have already shewn (in p. 3.)  
 that this comprehensive Maxim is exactly  
 the same in effect (though expressed in  
 different words) as the second great  
 Commandment of our Lord, " THOU  
 " SHALT LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR AS  
 " THYSELF;" in which (as the Apostle  
 Paul has expressly declared) "*All the*  
 "*Law is fulfilled,*" viz. "*All the Law*  
 (says he) "*is fulfilled in ONE WORD* (even)  
 "*in this,* THOU SHALT LOVE THY  
 " NEIGHBOUR AS THYSELF." (Gal.  
 v. 14.)

This *one Word* (as the Maxim is  
 esteemed by the Apostle Paul) is there-  
 fore undoubtedly that glorious " LAW  
 " OF LIBERTY" by which *we shall all*  
*be*

*be judged*, as the Apostle James hath fairly warned us—" *So speak ye, and so do*" (says he) "*as they that SHALL BE JUDGED BY THE LAW OF LIBERTY.*" And therefore, if what has already been said be duly considered, the propriety of citing this glorious and comprehensive LAW OF LIBERTY, in vindication of the NATURAL LIBERTY OF MANKIND *against the Tyranny of Slaveholders*, cannot be doubted or called in question ; for though this SUPREME LAW virtually prohibits every other kind of *Oppression*, yet its very title leads us to a more particular and express application of it AGAINST THE TOLERATION OF SLAVERY AMONG CHRISTIANS : because it seems to be thus eminently distinguished by the appointment of God himself in his Holy Word, as *the peculiar Antidote* against that *baneful Evil* (SLAVERY) which is most opposite and repugnant to its glorious title—

“ THE



“ THE LAW OF LIBERTY.” This  
 “ LAW OF LIBERTY,” this SUPREAM,  
 this “ ROYAL LAW,” must therefore  
 be our guide in the interpretation and  
 examination of all Laws which relate  
*to the Rights of Persons*, because it ex-  
 cludes *Partiality*, or *Respect of Persons*,  
 and consequently removes all ground for  
 the pretence of any *absolute Right of Do-*  
*minion inherent in the Masters* over their  
 Slaves : for as all Ranks of Men are  
 EQUAL *in the Sight of God* (the Christian  
 Slave, or Servant, being *the Freeman* of  
 the Lord, and the Christian Master the  
*Servant* of Christ, 1 Cor. vii. 22.) there  
 is no doubt but that the same *Christian*  
 Qualities are necessary to be maintained  
 by the *Christian MASTER*, that are re-  
 quired of the *Christian SERVANT* ; as  
*Humility*, *Forgiveness of Trespasses* or  
*Debts*, and (though not *Submission*, yet  
 certainly) *Brotherly Love towards Infe-*  
*riors*, with *unfeigned Charity* and *univer-*  
*sal*

*sal Benevolence*, founded on the glorious Maxim, or *Royal Law*, “ THOU SHALT  
 “ LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR AS THY-  
 “ SELF.” All which are as indispenfably  
 neceffary to form the difpofition of a  
*true Chriftian Mafter*, as they are abfo-  
 lutely incompatible with the oppreffive  
 and tyrannical Claims of our American  
 Slaveholders! “ *Quod tibi fieri non vis,*  
 “ *alteri ne feceris. What thou wouldeft*  
 “ *not have done to thee, do not thou to*  
 “ *another,*”—was the favourite Maxim  
 of the Emperor *Alexander Severus*, ac-  
 cording to the Report of *Lampridius*  
 quoted by the learned *Jof. Mede*, Book 3.  
 p. 550. This Principle was probably  
 deduced from “ THE ROYAL LAW,”  
 “ or LAW OF LIBERTY;” for *Lam-*  
*pridius* relates, that the Emperor heard  
 it either from fome Jews or Chriftians:  
 (“ *Quod à quibusdam five Judæis five*  
 “ *Chriftianis audierat, et tenebat,*” &c.)  
 and

and it cannot be denied, that the doctrine of it is necessarily included in that great and indispensable Commandment. The doctrine was expressed even by Christ himself nearly to the same effect, which I have already quoted :—“ *All things*  
“ *whatsoever ye would that Men should do*  
“ *to you, do ye even so to them :* FOR THIS  
“ *IS THE LAW and THE PROPHETS.*”  
(Mat. vii. 12.) So that Slavery is absolutely inconsistent with Christianity, because we cannot say of any *Slaveholder*, that he *doth not* to another, what he would not have done to himself ! For he is continually exacting *involuntary Labour* from others *without Wages*, which he would think monstrously unjust, were he himself the Sufferer ! Nay, many of them are so befotted with Avarice, that they are not content with reaping *the whole Fruit of other Men's Labour upon Earth* WITHOUT  
E WAGES ;

WAGES (3); but would deprive their poor Labourers even of their *eternal Comfort*, if they could exact a little more Work from them, by reducing them nearer to the State of Brutes!—What I advance cannot be denied; for it is notorious, that *many Masters* oppose the instruction of their *Slaves* in Christian Knowledge; and *but very few* promote it as they ought; so that the Iniquity of the ignorant Slave must rest *with double Weight* on the guilty head of the owner, to fill up the measure of his sins!

Suppose a reverse of fortune—that an English or Scotch *Slaveholder*, or *Slavedealer*, is shipwrecked on the Barbary Coast, and is retained, *as a Slave*, by the Moors, who seize him; or is *sold, as such*, to another Person, accord-

(3) “ *Woe unto him that buildeth his House by Unrighteousness, and his Chambers by Wrong; that useth his NEIGHBOUR’S SERVICE WITHOUT WAGES, AND GIVETH HIM NOT FOR HIS WORK.*” Jer. xxii. 13.

ing

ing to the detestable customs of that Savage people!—Would he esteem himself the *lawful Property* of his tawney Master, because the wretched police of those Barbarians, *in tolerating Slavery*, is similar to his own former practices as an *American Slaveholder*, or *African Trader*? Would he not think it cruel treatment to be esteemed *a mere Chattel*; and, as such, to be ranked with the horses and oxen of his African Master? *Like them*, to be compelled by stripes to perform the most servile and abject Labour? *Like them*, to receive *no Wages*, or other *Reward* for his Service, except a little *coarse Provender*, merely to keep him in working Order for his Master's Benefit? Would he not think himself grievously injured by being forcibly detained and prevented from working for himself? And would he not think himself absolutely *robbed of the Fruits of his own Labour*? He would certainly have



ample reason to lament the Mahometan's Ignorance of the heavenly Precept, "THOU SHALT LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR AS THYSELF; for he would then be taught, by his own Sufferings, to comprehend the full force, extent, and meaning of that benevolent Command, which, in his prosperity, he was never *willing* to understand, though the doctrine is so plain and obvious, that there can be no excuse for misunderstanding it; for unless the Slaveholder can make it appear, *that his SLAVE is not his NEIGHBOUR*, he must necessarily acknowledge *this "LAW OF LIBERTY"* to be *the true Measure* of his conduct and behaviour *towards his SLAVE*, as well as *towards all other MEN!*

Let not *Slaveholders* or *African Traders* conceive, that they are at liberty to receive or reject this glorious Precept, according as it may suit their interest  
or

or convenience ! But rather let them carefully examine (for they are particularly interested in the determination of the question) whether obedience to the doctrine of the great “ LAW OF LIBERTY,” is not absolutely indispensable ? And whether the violation of it is not dangerous to salvation ?

If they think there is any room to flatter themselves, that they do not offend God by tolerating Slavery among them, let them but examine their Actions by this “ ROYAL LAW,” and they will clearly perceive both their *Guilt and Danger, unless they have Consciences seared with a hot Iron !*”

“ *If ye have respect unto Persons*” (says the Apostle James, when he enforces the Observation of the ROYAL LAW) “ *ye commit Sin, and are convinced of THE LAW AS TRANSGRESSORS,*” &c. ii. 9.

Now



Now this Offence of “ *having Respect unto Persons,*” is a mark which strongly characterizes *Slaveholders* as Violators of “ THE ROYAL LAW.”

They are courteous, friendly, and hospitable enough, in general, to Persons of *their own Rank*, as, indeed, they ought to be ; but, at the same time, they look down upon their *Slaves* (who are *equally their Brethren*) as if they were not *Human Beings*, and rank them as *mere Chattels* with their Horses and Dogs ; so that there needs no Argument to prove them guilty of “ *having Respect unto Persons*” in a most notorious degree, whereby they surely “ *commit Sin,*” and are “ *convinced of the Law as Transgressors.*” What therefore have such Men to expect, when they shall be judged by “ THE LAW OF LIBERTY !” especially as the Apostle adds, “ *they shall*

“ *shall have Judgment without Mercy,*  
 “ *that have shewed no Mercy !*” &c.

And even our Lord himself has declared the very same doctrine, though in different Words—“ *With the same*  
 “ *MEASURE that ye METE*” (says he)  
 “ *shall it be MEASURED unto you again.*”

Τῷ γὰρ αὐτῷ μέτρῳ ᾧ μέτρεῖτε ἀντιμετρηθήσεται ὑμῖν.  
 Luke vi. 38. Mat. vii. 2. Mark iv. 24.

What MEASURE of *Benevolence*, therefore, have these Men to expect, who endeavour to enrich THEMSELVES by *enslaving* and *oppressing* their BRETHREN? For Men, who, “ *without Mercy,*” or Fellow-feeling, have violated “ THE  
 “ ROYAL LAW OF LIBERTY,” can neither be said to *love God*, nor *their Neighbour*, as directed in the two great Commandments, and consequently are Violaters of “ *the whole Law ;*” by which they absolutely deprive themselves of  
 the

the Benefit of Christ's Redemption ! This seems to be the necessary meaning of that dreadful Doom before-mentioned ; “ *He shall have JUDGMENT* “ *without MERCY, that hath shewed NO* “ *MERCY.*”

But let no Man conceive, that I presume to charge Individuals, or *any Person in particular*, with the want of this MERCY, so necessary to Salvation, even though they are apparently guilty of that oppressive treatment of their *Neighbour*, which I now oppose ; for this would seem like setting bounds to the *Mercy of God*, whereby I should be liable to involve myself, as an *uncharitable Judge*, in the same condemnation. And there are, certainly, a variety of circumstances, beyond the reach of human knowledge, that may extenuate the guilt of *particular Persons*, of which the great Searcher of Hearts alone can judge !

It

It is not, therefore, *the Persons*, but *the uncharitable Practices* of Slaveholders and Slavedealers, that I now venture to condemn; and these I can with confidence affirm to be really *damnable*, or *dangerous to Salvation*, as being the most notorious violations of that Christian Charity, or LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOUR, which God indispensably requires of us, and without which, the highest Gifts are vain, and even *Faith itself*! For, *tho' I have* "ALL FAITH" (said the Apostle Paul) "*so that I could remove Mountains, and have* "no CHARITY, *I am nothing.*" 1 Cor. xiii. 2. The nature of this indispensable CHARITY is more particularly described by the same Apostle under the appellation of LOVE (ἡ ἀγάπη). "LOVE," (says he) "*worketh no ILL to his Neighbour: therefore LOVE is the fulfilling of the Law.*" Rom. xiii. 10. But, as the being detained in an *involuntary Slavery* is one of the greatest ILLS, or EVILS, that can

F

happen

happen to *our Neighbour*, it must necessarily be allowed, that he who *causes*, or *continues* such an *unnatural Oppression* of poor unfortunate *Strangers*, who never injured him, nor his, nor ever voluntarily contracted to serve him, even for the shortest term, much less for life; such a Man, I say, most certainly “*worketh ILL to his Neighbour* ;” and, consequently, violates that *saving Love*, which is required for “*the fulfilling of the Law.*” For “*he that LOVETH another*” (says the Apostle in a preceding verse of the same chapter) “*hath fulfilled the Law:*” and after repeating the several Articles of the Decalogue, respecting *our Duty towards our NEIGHBOUR*, he adds, “*and if there be any other Commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this, THOU SHALT LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR AS THYSELF.*” Rom. xiii. 8—10. We may therefore fairly conclude, that this glorious MAX-



IM is the touchstone or proof of *that saving LOVE*, which is THE FULFILLING OF THE LAW, and without which “FAITH IS DEAD,” as declared by *the Apostle Paul*; that it is also “THE ROYAL LAW,” being thus eminently distinguished from all other Precepts of the Gospel, by the *Apostle James*; and if it *is not* also particularly signified (though I am fully convinced that it *is*) under the Title of “THE LAW OF “LIBERTY,” by the *same Apostle*, in his 2d Chapter; yet it is surely one of the most essential and comprehensive Principles of that “LAW OF LIBERTY,” by which *we shall all be judged*; because the Apostle at the same time declares, that “*he shall have Judgment WITHOUT MERCY, who hath shewed NO MERCY* ;” (chap. ii. 13.) by which he manifestly refers to the Breach of that particular Precept, which ought to regulate the Conduct of all Mankind to-

wards each other ; and therefore, lastly, we must acknowledge this same Precept to be also THE TRUE MEASURE or Test on which our eternal Doom will depend in that awful Day, when it “ *shall be* “ MEASURED *unto us again,*” according to THE MEASURE of our Actions, as declared by the *eternal Judge himself,* (Mat. vii. 2. Mark iv. 24. Luke vi. 38.) whose Words cannot fail ! And if even a mere *Neglect* or *Omission* in our Duty towards our *Neighbour* is so *offensive* to our blessed Lord, that he esteems it as a Denial and Affront to his *own Person,* (which I have already observed) how *much more offensive* to him must be the *actual Commission* of the grossest Injuries, such as the Exaction of an *involuntary Service* from our poor Brethren “ WITH- “ OUT WAGES,” and the various Cruelties usually practised to enforce the same, which are the necessary and unavoidable Attendants on *Slavery*—What a dreadful



a dreadful MEASURE OF RETRIBUTION, then, may obstinate and unrepenting *Slaveholders* and *Slavedealers* justly expect from the righteous Judge! Surely there is but too much Cause to apprehend, that Christ will one Day PROFESS UNTO THEM—" *Inasmuch as ye have done it unto* " *one of the least of these my Brethren,* " *ye have DONE IT UNTO ME!*" (Mat. XXV. 40.)

This Sentence, indeed, is applied in the Text to those who shall have DONE GOOD to their Brethren; yet by necessary Consequence it is equally applicable (as in the 45th verse) to those who have neglected, or shewn them *no Brotherly LOVE* and *CHARITY!*—" *Inasmuch* (said our Lord) " *as ye did it not to one of* " *the least of these, ye did it not to me.* " *And these* (by which our Lord plainly referred to all that should neglect or violate that indispensable *Brotherly Love* and

and *Charity* which he enjoined) “ *shall*  
 “ *go away INTO EVERLASTING PU-*  
 “ *NISHMENT : but the Righteous into*  
 “ *Life eternal !*”

But alas !—to *worldly* minded Men the Judgments of *another World* seem too far distant to awaken their Attention, though they are liable to be called away, in the very next Hour, to a State of Existence, wherein the most pungent Remorse will avail them nothing ! From such therefore, and from those unrepenting Individuals, that will still persist in violating the LAW OF LIBERTY by *Slave-dealing* and *Slave-holding*, it is time to turn away ! I have already bestowed too much labour upon them, I mean, with respect to themselves ! But this Warning was not intended for them alone ;—the whole Community—every Individual (without excepting even those who never had the least Concern in promoting

moting *Slavery*) is personally interested in the Consideration of this Subject! For if a Breach of God's Command, even in the *hidden* Crime of a single Individual, as in the Case of *Achan*, could involve a whole Nation in Trouble (4), and deprive them of God's Blessing,  
how

(4) “ — *For Achan the Son of Carmi,*”—took of THE “ ACCURSED THING,” (i. e. of that which was devoted to Destruction by God's express Command): “ *And the Anger of the Lord was kindled against the Children of Israel.*” Joshua vii. 1.—Thus the whole NATION was involved in the Consequences of Achan's Guilt! Nay, *Jehovah* himself expressly imputed the Action of that one Individual to the NATION at large, until a solemn and public Exertion of NATIONAL Justice had expiated that presumptive Breach of his Command! For when Joshua and the Elders of Israel lay prostrate before God, lamenting the public Calamity and Disgrace, which a late Defeat of their Army had brought upon the NATION,—“ *the Lord (Jehovah) said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy Face? ISRAEL hath sinned, and THEY HAVE also TRANSGRESSED my Covenant which I commanded them: for THEY have even taken of THE ACCURSED THING, and have stolen, (that is, THEY have stolen יַבֵּל) “ and THEY have dissembled also, and THEY have put (it) even among their own Stuff.”* (Yet this general Crime, for so it was imputed,

was

how much more hateful in the Sight of God must be a *public* Infringement of his ROYAL LAW, THE PERFECT LAW OF LIBERTY, by *national* Authority !

The AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE, which includes the most contemptuous Violations of *Brotherly Love* and *Charity* that men can be guilty of, is openly encouraged and promoted by the British Parliament ! And the most detestable and oppressive

was perpetrated by a *single Individual*, though the *whole* NATION was doomed to suffer for it, till the actual Aggressor should be brought to *public Justice* ; and this should teach us, that the Welfare of NATIONS greatly depends on a strict Administration of public *Justice* and *Righteousness*, lest the State should be accountable for the Crimes of Individuals.) “ *Therefore the Children of Israel*” (said Jehovah himself) “ *could not stand before their Enemies,*” “ (but) *turned (their) Backs before their Enemies, because*” “ *they were ACCURSED.*” (Thus the CURSE was transferred to the People from THE ACCURSED THING, until *public Justice* could trace and transfer it to the devoted Head of the guilty Person !) “ *Neither will I* (said Jehovah) “ *be with you any more, except ye destroy THE*” “ *ACCURSED from among you.*” See the whole Chapter.

*Slavery,*

*Slavery*, that ever disgraced even the unenlightened Heathens, is notoriously *tolerated* in the British Colonies by the *public Acts* of their respective Assemblies, —by Acts that have been ratified with the Assent and Concurrence of BRITISH KINGS !

The horrible Guilt therefore, which is incurred by *Slave-dealing* and *Slave-holding*, is no longer confined to the few hardened *Individuals*, that are immediately concerned in those baneful Practices, but alas ! the WHOLE BRITISH EMPIRE is involved !

By the unhappy Concurrence of *National Authority*, the GUILT is rendered *National* ; and *National GUILT* must inevitably draw down from GOD some tremendous *National Punishment* (which, I trust, is fully demonstrated in my Tract ON THE LAW OF RETRIBUTION) if we do not speedily “ *take away the accursed*  
 G “ *Thing*



“ *Thing from among us,*”—if we do not carefully reform and redress at least every *public* and notorious Violation of God’s “ *Royal Law,*” “ *the perfect Law of Liberty!*”

GRANVILLE SHARP.

“ GLORY to God in the Highest!  
 “ And on Earth—PEACE,  
 “ GOOD WILL towards Men!”

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*Traacts by the same AUTHOR.*

Printed for B. WHITE, at HORACE'S-HEAD,  
FLEET-STREET.

I. **A** Short Treatise on the English Tongue. Being an Attempt to render the Reading and Pronunciation of the same more-easy to Foreigners. 1767.

II. Remarks on several very important Prophecies, first Edition, in 1768, (second Edition, 1775.)

This Book contains, 1st, Remarks on the Prophecy of Isaiah vii. 13-16.—That a *Virgin should conceive and bear a Son*. 2dly, Remarks on the Nature and Style of prophetical Writings. 3dly, Remarks on the Accomplishment of Isaiah's Prophecy, (vii. 8.) "*Within threescore and five Years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a People.*" 4thly, On the Departure of the *Sceptre* and *Lawgiver* from Judah. 5thly, A Confirmation of the above Remarks by farther Examples drawn from the Prophets, &c.

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This Tract contains many Examples of the monstrous *Iniquity* and *Injustice* of the Plantation Laws respecting Slaves; as also some Account of the gradual Abolition of the ancient English *Slavery* called *VILLENAGE*, which was at length happily effected by the Wisdom and Perseverance of the English Courts of Common Law.

IV. Remarks concerning the Encroachments on the River Thames near *Durham-Yard*. 1771.

V.



V. An Appendix to the Representation of the Injustice and dangerous Tendency of tolerating Slavery, (See Number III.) 1772.

VI. Remarks on the Opinions of some of the most celebrated Writers on CROWN LAW, respecting the due Distinction between *Manslaughter* and *Murder*; shewing that the Indulgence allowed by the Courts to *voluntary Manslaughter* in Rencounters, DUELS, &c. is *indiscriminate* and without Foundation in Law; and is also one of the principal Causes of the Continuance and present Increase of the *base and disgraceful Practice of DUELLING*. 1773.

The peculiar Case of *Gentlemen in the Army*, respecting the Practice of DUELLING, is carefully examined in this Tract; as also the Depravity and Folly of *modern Men of Honour* falsely so called.

VII. In two Parts. 1. A Declaration of the People's *Natural Right* to a Share in the Legislature; which is the fundamental Principle of *the British Constitution of State*. 2. A Declaration, or Defence, of the *the same Doctrine*, when applied *particularly to THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND*. 1774. (2d Edition, 1775.)

In these two Pieces many Examples and Proofs are produced concerning *the parliamentary Rights of the People*; viz. That the Assent of the People is absolutely necessary to render Laws *valid*: That a *free and equal* Representation of the Inhabitants of this Kingdom is necessary for the *Salvation* of the State, and the Security of *Peace* and of *Property*: That the Representatives of the People have no *legal* Right to give assent in any "*new Device without Conference with their Countries*:" That it is an ancient and just Right of the People to elect a *new Parliament* "*every Year once, and more often if Need be*;" and that no Regulations whatsoever, wherein the *Representatives* are made *Judges of their own Elections*, can be effectual against national Corruption! Examples are likewise here given of several *surreptitious STATUTES* that are void through the Want of *due legal Assent*; and of Others that are *void* by being unjust

unjust and repugnant to *constitutional Principles!* The Danger of keeping *standing Armies* is also demonstrated, and the Wickedness and *Impolicy* of *Acting* by *national Corruption!* &c. &c.

*The following Tracts by the same AUTHOR*

A R E

Printed for B. WHITE, in FLEET-STREET, and  
E. and C. DILLY, in the POULTRY.

VIII. The just Limitation of *Slavery* in the *Laws* of  
*God*, compared with the unbounded Claims of the  
*African Traders* and *British American Slave-holders*.

To this Piece is added a copious Appendix, containing, An Answer to the Rev. Mr. *Thompson's* Tract in Favour of the *African Slave-Trade*. Letters concerning the *lineal Descent* of the *Negroes* from the Sons of *HAM*. The *Spanish* Regulations for the gradual Enfranchisement of Slaves. A Proposal, on the same Principles, for the gradual Enfranchisement of Slaves in *America*. REPORTS of Determinations in the several COURTS OF LAW against Slavery, &c. 1776.

IX. THE LAW OF PASSIVE OBEDIENCE; or Christian  
Submission to personal Injuries :

Wherein is shewn that the several Texts of Scripture, which command the entire Submission of *Servants* or *Slaves* to their *Masters*, cannot authorize the latter to exact an involuntary *Servitude*, nor in the least Degree justify the Claims of modern *Slave-holders*; and also that the several Texts, which enjoin Submission to *Rulers, Magistrates, &c.* do not in any Respect authorize the dangerous Doctrine of an *unlimited passive Obedience*.

X. "THE LAW OF LIBERTY;" or (as it is called in  
Scripture by way of *Eminence*) "the *Royal Law*,"  
by which all *Mankind* will certainly be judged!

XI.

XI. THE LAW OF RETRIBUTION ; or a serious Warning to *Great-Britain* and her *Colonies*, founded on unquestionable Examples of God's temporal Vengeance against Tyrants, Slave-holders, and Oppressors. 1776.

The Examples are selected from Predictions, in the Old-Testament, of *national* Judgements, which (being compared with the actual Accomplishment) demonstrate " the sure Word of Prophecy," as well as the immediate Interposition of divine Providence, to recompence impenitent *Nations* according to their Works.

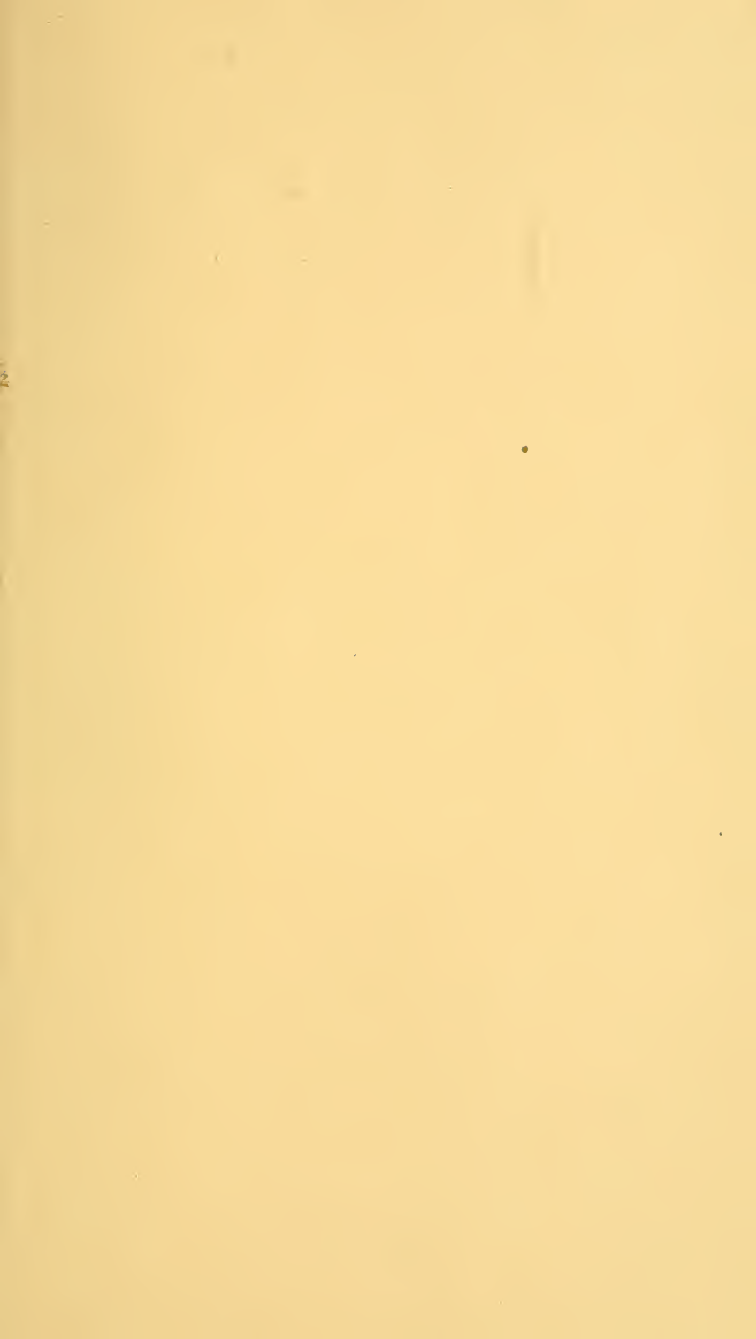
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XIII. THE CASE OF SAUL ; being an Appendage to the former Traët, wherein the *compound Nature* and various *Principles of Action* in MAN (with the Reality of *supernatural spiritual Influence*, both good and bad) are proved by unquestionable Examples from the History of that unfortunate Monarch, and also from many other Parts of Scripture.











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December 1986











